



**CITY OF NORTHAMPTON, MASSACHUSETTS
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS**

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Donna LaScaleia
Director

Memorandum

To: Mayor David Narkewicz
From: Donna LaScaleia, DPW Director
Date: 9-30-16
Re: River Road Retaining Wall

The River Road Retaining Wall is located in the Leeds village section of Northampton, north of the village center and immediately adjacent to the Mill River. River Road connects the town of Williamsburg and State Route 9 to the village of Leeds. A 950-foot long section of the road has a stone masonry retaining wall / floodwall along its easterly margin, providing for the retainage of the earthen embankment and road, and also protection from flooding during high water events in the adjacent Mill River.

Although its exact age is unknown, the retaining wall appears to be several decades old. Based on its condition, it does not appear that the wall was originally constructed with a suitable foundation system. Over time, the flows within the Mill River have scoured and undercut significant sections of the wall, and runoff events have compromised the integrity of the upper portions of the wall. The Williamsburg sanitary sewer interceptor is located within River Road, and is also protected by the retaining wall.

The City of Northampton is concerned that the masonry wall is not capable of withstanding future significant flooding events within the Mill River or further impacts from significant localized flooding of River Road. During heavy rains in late March, 2010, a section of the upper wall was dislodged by high-velocity flows.

The City originally applied for funding assistance for this project under a FEMA-1813-DR-MA disaster appropriation in April of 2010, but was not successful. Subsequently, The City reapplied under a new disaster appropriation (1895-DR) in March of 2011. Under these Hazard Mitigation Grant Program grants, the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) is the grant applicant, and the cities and towns are the sub-applicants. MEMA receives all the grant applications from the sub-applicants, reviews them, ranks them, and sends the top applications on to FEMA for their review and approval. The process can be laborious and time

consuming. The grant contract for this project was finally signed in August of 2014, with a deadline of 3-18-17 for all construction work to be completed.

Permitting and design have been ongoing since 2014. Upon completion of the permitting and design process, in August of 2016, the City solicited construction bids to remove the existing stone masonry wall, and replace it with a cast-in-place concrete retaining wall / floodwall with sufficient height to protect the road and sewer from a 100-year flood event and all localized flooding.

Construction bids were opened on September 14, 2016. The low bidder was E.T.&L. Construction of Stow, MA, with a base bid of \$1,605,070.00. This base bid is roughly 25% more than had been originally budgeted for in 2014. While the estimated total cost of the project, including engineering and administration is now \$2,022,000, the contribution from the city, after grants and other funds have been applied, is expected to be \$790,512.

The original council order for the project was adopted on June 27, 2013 and amended by the council on April 2, 2015 to allow for borrowing up to \$1,607,125, provided the borrowing be reduced by any amounts received from other sources for the project. The order now before this council on October 6, 2016 seeks to allow for borrowing up to \$2,022,000, provided the borrowing be reduced by any amounts received from other sources for the project.

Project Timeline

04/09/2010	Original (Initial) Application filed with MEMA, for Hazard Mitigation Grant Program under FEMA- <u>1813</u> -DR-MA (winter ice storm). City received notification that application was not accepted by FEMA, but was encouraged to re-file under a new Disaster Relief appropriation.
03/04/2011	Second Application filed with MEMA, for Hazard Mitigation Grant Program under FEMA- <u>1895</u> -DR-MA (major storm with extreme weather conditions, record breaking rainfall, and severe flooding).
	08/02/2011 – City provided additional technical information in response to MEMA/FEMA’s request.
	10/30/2012 – City provided additional technical information in response to MEMA/FEMA’s request.
03/01/2014	Northampton DPW receives notification that MEMA/FEMA is going to be moving towards an appropriation and contract for funding.
04/14/2014	Northampton DPW issued RFP for the design and permitting of the River Road Retaining Wall Improvement Project.
05/09/2014	Proposals received for design and permitting.
08/12/2014	Contract for design and permitting signed with GZA.
08/15/2014	Northampton DPW initiates discussions with the Northampton Historical Commission regarding wall demolition and reconstruction—finishes and materials.
08/28/2014	MEMA executes contract with City of Northampton for Hazard Mitigation Grant Program funding under HMGP- <u>1813</u> . The Contract specified that <i>“All work must be completed by the contract end date of 3/18/2017 to be eligible for FEMA reimbursement.”</i>
08/2014- 7/2016	Design and permitting process ongoing. Some delays due to coordination with Northampton Historical Commission and detailed evaluation of alternatives related to historical/aesthetic concerns. These concerns were largely resolved in late April of 2016, and final design and preparation of bid documents was commenced.
07/27/2016	Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife issues preliminary approvals, pending “Turtle Protection Plan”.
08/15/2016	Northampton Conservation Commission issues their “Order of Conditions” (wetlands permit).
08/24/2016	Construction Bid appears in the Central Register
09/14/2016	Construction Bids received, opened, and read.
09/19/2016	Northampton DPW issued Notice of Award to E.T.&L. Construction Corp. of Stow, MA.